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HILL, SUZANNE RANSLEY. Exhibition of Paintings. (1968)  
Directed by: Gilbert Carpenter pp. 7

The thesis presentation is comprised of an introduction, technical information, and a numerical cataloguing of fourteen oil paintings. Transparent slides of fourteen oil paintings are included. The paintings have been exhibited publicly in fulfillment of the degree requirement.

Suzanne Ransley Hill

This Thesis Submitted to  
the Faculty of the Graduate School at  
The University of North Carolina at Greensboro  
in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Fine Arts

Greensboro  
May, 1968

Approved By

*[Signature]*

Director

EXHIBITION OF PAINTINGS

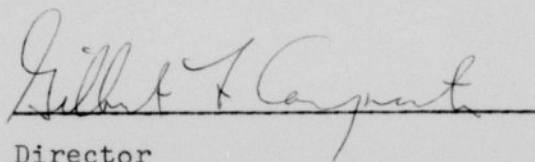
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APPROVAL SHEET

This thesis has been approved by the following  
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## INTRODUCTION

My work is done consciously and purposefully by a definite method which is always open to reasonable criticism. Its direct result is a visual object. Because this object is purely and only visual, it neither suggests nor demands any literal explanation or justification. All that can be intelligently and profitably discussed is the technical performance by means of which it was produced.

## TECHNICAL INFORMATION

To me the line is always present. The line is a primary element of art - which I study. What follows here is an explanation of how I paint the line.

I began by painting dots. These dots ran together and formed the line. At first, I was unsure of this development. A color would suggest a new concept; a stroke would alter the content; a change of mood would demand the repainting of an entire picture. An etching class was the answer. Here, I discovered the power and elegance of the simple line. I felt its force. I saw its beauty. Working with the etched line reenforced its meaning and I wanted to express this feeling with oil paint.

After some consideration and exploration, I discarded the idea of painting these delicate lines with a more fluid medium like watercolor or the acrylic paints. I put away the fine, pointed brushes and any other instrument which I could lean upon for assistance. I was in dire need of gaining some technical ability, and I knew I would accomplish more by taking the more difficult path. I chose to paint with oil, for I can't resist its feel and smell.

I explored with the paint. Some of the lines were made with a diluted solution, but for the most part the

paint was heavy. I paint with strong color and want my paint to cover well.

My brushes, with which I paint the line, are flat with stiff bristles. The size ranged from number 0 to number 4. I found a new brush must be broken in before use and that even a clean brush had to sit an hour in turpentine to enable me to execute the line I desired. I painted upon two surfaces - masonite and canvas. The masonite yielded a finer, cleaner line, but I soon discarded it for canvas. I realized that by placing these delicate lines on the rough textured surface of the canvas would be more of a challenge, and thus I would accomplish more in the final result.

In preparing the canvas surface I followed a definite method. After mastering the line on slick masonite, I began to work on fine canvas with several smooth coats of gesso. When I grew more proficient, I moved on to rougher canvas. I used fewer coats of gesso; I painted over old paintings with their bumps of paint; I painted upon canvas with no undercoat at all. Each experiment aimed for control.

To paint these lines was difficult. My first paintings were exceedingly hard and were primarily lessons in control and discipline. I had to sit. At times my arm would shake from tension and I would rest it on my knee. After long hours of painting, my hand would shake from weariness and I



would support my wrist with my free hand. As I continued to paint, I found myself drawing closer and closer to my work, until at last my face was six inches from the canvas surface. To reach a difficult spot, I would balance the canvas in my lap. But this unorthodox method of painting proved its worth. Gradually, the control of the hand came. Each line produced made the next line come easier. I began to relax until now the creation of a line is almost effortless.

My body adjusted to this discipline far more easily than my mind. I remember my first paintings in which I kept counting the lines as I painted them. I never did arrive at any exact number - I would continually lose track and start the count over. The line had become an obsession.

The nature of the line forced me to use a determined mental effort to control my hand. In controlling my hand, I controlled the line and this forced discipline took over my mind. The line had become all important. It was going to be my means of expression - my tool of research. It had already taught me discipline and control, and this would enable me to paint.

Once I had mastered the making of a line, I began to explore all its facets. I have made the line dynamic and pulsing with life. I have made the line dead. I have used the line to balance and support; to unify and tear apart.

I have watched the line lead the eye and tell it where to go. I have made the line sit and do nothing. I have discovered many types of lines; I have felt and seen their emotional impact. I work with lines and color; lines and space; lines and form. I have just begun.

Each painting remains a learning process by which I add another iota of information to my knowledge.

My paintings are small. The canvas size never exceeds 32x36 inches - never smaller than 12x14. I begin by painting a smooth undercoat of solid or varied color. If this first coat is of diverse colors, then each color is of different shape. All shapes and forms are made by the brush and have a biological origin. Upon this base I begin to build and create a configuration using the line. With the line as my tool I may work with repetition of shape and form patterns of color, space, or movement. I may use the line to portray an imaginative scene. At present, I am discovering the line in nature and I paint the line as I see it - in clams, trees, marsh, and sea.

Another element remains constant throughout my work. This element is design. A painting is never complete until the all over design satisfies my eye. I paint the line. I study its characteristics. I learn of its properties. I express my own world ultimately through design.

Two paintings in the thesis exhibit are of mixed media.

I have combined oil paint and an acetate tape. This tape is primarily used in making charts and graphs, but it seemed the perfect solution in giving me the precise and exact line I desired.

Chart - Pak tape is a self sticking tape which comes in many colors, widths, and patterns. In my paintings I used transparent tape, both of matte and glossy surface. The colors varied from black to luminous reds and yellows. The width of the tape was primarily  $1/64$ th of an inch to  $3/32$ nds of an inch.

## CATALOGUE

1. Menhaden Gill Arch #1, Oil and Tape on Canvas 24 x 34"
2. Self Portrait, Oil on Canvas 26 x 34"
3. Sea Grass, Oil on Canvas 16 x 32"
4. Form, Shape, Content, Oil on Canvas 18 x 26"
5. Crazy Quilt, Oil and Acrylic on Canvas 28 x 32"
6. Sea Leaves, Oil on Canvas 22 x 32"
7. Improvisation in Blue, Oil on Canvas 20 x 26"
8. Menhaden Gill Arch #2, Oil on Canvas 16 x 28"
9. Incense and Peppermint, Oil on Canvas 20 x 40"
10. Linear Fantasy, Tape, Oil, Magic Marker on Canvas 24 x 24"
11. Urban Renewal, Oil on Masonite 16 x 20"
12. Marsh, Oil on Canvas 16 x 26"
13. Insides of a Clam, Oil, Tape on Masonite 16 x 20"
14. Roast Duck, Oil on Masonite 16 x 20"